

**Kodalith**

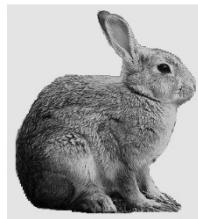
**David Lloyd**

**Smithereens Press**



Kodalith

David Lloyd



Smithereens Press 9

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*where to?* said a voice then  
the voice went away, by which (as if)  
time, in a sea a dark mood,  
over the rocks, where there are  
no rocks finishes you.

Maurice Scully, *Livelihood*



## **Fields**

So livid a gleam along the rim.  
White winds descended from the  
Shattering fields, runnels groove  
The mantle, the folded slab breaks  
Down the gradient. Numb'd  
In the song they sing, lay down  
The possibilities: flesh knits its  
Meshes into the grain of the stone.

## **Drywash**

Dead wind off the fang-range.  
Strange weather, strange witness  
In the teeth of it, bit and  
Grit in the fantail. Did you  
Think we would leave and not leave  
Bone in the downdrift?  
Degrading, silting, grit angel  
Sweeping the wash with your wing

## **Petroglyph**

Skin burrs. The thumbs impress  
The fibres finding the grain  
Of the stone. Such transfer,  
The light writing turned ghost-  
Flesh mapped in stone: did we  
Remember the gifted one, the four  
Staves of its opening? Nothing  
Is given. It gives and is gone.

## **Face**

What the rockface encloses:  
My skin imprinted with  
Its warm relief, sugar-  
Lift pockmarks. Open  
The stone book: light etches  
Its ridges, the furrow archive  
Sanded away. Scar tissue stares  
Into the tender slate.

## **Mantle**

Rock breaks the living. The living  
Wrap stone with all their new  
Brutalities: root, blast, frack.  
In the breaker's yard, bodies  
Bend in the wind. We rattle  
Their bones in the crown of  
A hat. We rattle. We raffle  
The mantle. It shears like  
A sea on the shore of the living.

## **Spine**

Januarized runnels bear down,  
Open back into this thing they  
Carry forward: acrid taste of  
Burnt treacle or some other  
Unworldly afterglow. Failed  
Wings at the shoulder shrug  
Pain to the floor, it slips down  
From the spine. Easy. Easy on.

## **Casket**

Hurt bleeds into another's rib,  
Another beat, a casket  
Sealed into the cleft for  
Future incubation. Lidless  
Eye turned in to the handprint  
Fixed in sand: night compact  
Pressed into the socket. Think it  
A fold, a wrinkle, graved in the skin.

## **Salt**

Salt ventures underfoot: a thread  
Trotted back into the slab, dulled  
Savour to the tongue, reminding.  
A plain wind dresses the stone,  
Histories scored into its face  
It stands out from the dark room,  
White remnant of the promised  
Flight: what you do give to be of

## **Vitruvian**

Vitruvian, ridiculous, braced  
In the crevice, the aperture  
Shrinks your horizon: black  
Marble curtains for you, for you.  
Quartered in stone, water-drawn,  
Hacked into with light piers,  
The white bits ciphered across  
The slab. Percussed. Sprung.

## **Prism**

A thing breaks beyond naming.  
In the grit depot, in the shingle  
Archive, blood meets with its  
Congealing. Your debrided palm  
Greets the horizon: sky-prism  
Shredding the lightface late  
Into the farness, into the violet  
Wash over fracture and fold.

## **Copestone**

The coping weighs on his shoulder:  
Turn at a stroke, to the eyeball  
Welled up with minding. What if  
The thing should sing then, sing  
Out from the nought rim, spelling  
With numbers, a jabber flush to  
The finish. You're history. Drapes  
Sweep the place of its leavings.

## **Chamber**

Some pause and then resume. Erratic  
Rock adrift on the mantle: what  
Are you doing here, stone chamber  
Voided with stone? The burden  
Bears down on the bone, shin  
Ache, joint skew: come dance  
With me into the black site, come  
Sing with me into the dry dark, into  
The wind's teeth, ad lib, ad lib, ad lib





Note: Some poems from *Kodalith* were initially published in *Hambone* 20, Fall 2012, with thanks to Nate Mackey.



David Lloyd is a writer and critic, born in Ireland and currently living in Los Angeles and teaching at the University of California, Riverside. *Arc & Sill: Poems 1979-2009*, (Shearsman Books and New Writers Press, 2012) collects his five previous books of poetry: *Taropatch* (Oakland: Jimmy's House of Knowledge, 1985), *Coupures* (Dublin: hardPressed Poetry, 1987), *Change of State* (Berkeley: Cusp Books, 1993), *Sill*, (Los Angeles: Cusp Books, 2006), and *Vega* (Los Angeles: Mind Made Books, 2009). His play, *The Press*, has had staged readings in Dublin, Los Angeles, Liverpool, and Manila, and premiered at Liverpool Hope University in 2010. As a critic, he works on Irish literature and culture and on poetry and aesthetics. His most recent critical book is *Irish Culture and Colonial Modernity, 1800-2000: The Transformation of Oral Space* (Cambridge, 2011). He is the editor of Cusp Books, a chapbook press based in Los Angeles.



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